Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.   (currently amended)   A method for recommending a product using ~~an~~a computer implemented expert system, the method comprising:

determining problem domain information via interaction ~~with an agent~~between a live human agent and a customer, wherein the live human agent serves as an intermediary between the expert system and the customer;

determining need information of ~~a user~~the customer via interaction ~~with the agent~~between the live human agent and the customer, wherein the need information relates to telecommunications needs of the customer;

inputting the ~~user~~customer need information into the expert system, wherein the act of inputting the user need information into the expert system is performed by the live human agent;

transforming the ~~user~~customer need information into a trait, the trait being characteristic of a telecommunications product of relevance to the ~~user using the expert system~~customer, the telecommunications product of relevance being selected from a plurality of available telecommunications products; and

rating a telecommunications product within the plurality of available telecommunications products using the expert system.

2.   (currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein ~~an agent~~the live human agent determines the need information of the ~~user~~customer and inputs the ~~user~~customer need information into the expert system via a graphical user interface serviced by an agent computer.

3.   (currently amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

summarizing the ratings of the plurality of available telecommunications products; and

providing explanation of the ratings of the plurality of available telecommunications products.

4.   (currently amended)   The method of claim 3, wherein the summary of the ratings of the plurality of available <u>telecommunications</u> products comprises at least one of a recommended solution, a compatible solution, and a not recommended solution.

5.   (currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of available <u>telecommunications</u> products comprises a service.

6.   (currently amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising communicating the rating from the <u>live human</u> agent to [[a]]<u>the</u> customer; and
        wherein the rating of the <u>telecommunications</u> product within the plurality of available <u>telecommunications</u> products using the expert system is performed in real time.

7.   (currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the expert system employs a fuzzy value in performing rating of the <u>telecommunications</u> product.

8.   (currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the expert system employs a crisp value in performing rating of the <u>telecommunications</u> product.

9. through 40. (canceled)

41.   (currently amended)   An expert system that is operable for recommending a product, the expert system comprising:
        a computer network;
        [[an]]<u>a live human</u> agent interface, communicatively coupled to the computer network, comprising a graphical user interface;
        a product database, communicatively coupled to the computer network, that contains a plurality of available <u>telecommunications</u> products, the product database being communicatively coupled to a plurality of providers of the plurality of available <u>telecommunications</u> products thereby allowing updating of the product database in real time; and
        an expert system, communicatively coupled to the computer network, that is operable to rate at least two available <u>telecommunications</u> products within the plurality of

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available <u>telecommunications</u> products using dynamic calculation and based on a customer need;

wherein [[an]]<u>a live human</u> agent and a customer interact in real time whereby the customer communicates a customer need to the <u>live human</u> agent and the <u>live human</u> agent accesses the functionality of the expert system, via the graphical user interface, to perform selection of an available <u>telecommunications</u> product from the product database based on the rating of the at least two available <u>telecommunications</u> products during the ~~customer-client~~<u>agent-customer</u> interaction;

<u>wherein</u> the expert system generates output comprising a recommended <u>telecommunications</u> solution and a compatible <u>telecommunications</u> solution and presents the output to the <u>live human</u> agent via the graphical user interface, each of the recommended <u>telecommunications</u> solution and a compatible <u>telecommunications</u> solution being selected from the plurality of available <u>telecommunications</u> products within the product database, the recommended <u>telecommunications</u> solution having a rating that is higher than the rating of the compatible <u>telecommunications</u> solution; and

<u>wherein</u> the <u>live human</u> agent communicates the recommended <u>telecommunications</u> solution and the compatible <u>telecommunications</u> solution to the customer in real time after the expert system generates the output.

42.   (previously presented)   The expert system of claim 41, wherein at least one of the recommended solution and the compatible solution comprises at least one of a data network solution and an Internet access solution.

43.   (previously presented)   The expert system of claim 41, wherein the output further comprises an explanation for why the recommended solution was selected by the expert system.

44.   (previously presented)   The expert system of claim 41, wherein the expert system employs at least one of a dedicated Internet access guidance engine and a data network guidance engine to rate the at least two available products within the plurality of available products.

45. (currently amended) The expert system of claim 41, wherein the live human agent receives information concerning at least one of the available products within the plurality of available products ~~to the agent~~ via the graphical user interface.

46. (currently amended) A plurality of software instructions stored on a media that, upon execution by a processing circuitry, are operable to recommend a product by using an expert system, comprising:

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that determines problem domain information during interaction with [[an]]a live human agent, wherein the problem domain relates to a telecommunications network configuration;

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that determines need information of a ~~user~~customer during interaction with the live human agent, wherein the need information relates to a telecommunications network configuration;

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that inputs the ~~user~~customer need information into the expert system;

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that transforms the ~~user~~customer need information into a trait, the trait being characteristic of a product of relevance to the ~~user~~customer as determined using expert system processing that is performed by the expert system, the product of relevance being selected from a plurality of available products; and

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that rates a product within the plurality of available products using the expert system, wherein the product comprises a telecommunications network configuration.

47. through 50. (canceled)

51. (currently amended) A plurality of software instructions stored on a media that, upon execution by a processing circuitry, are operable to recommend a ~~product~~telecommunications network configuration, comprising:

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that performs expert system processing to rate at least two available products within a plurality of available

products using dynamic calculation and based on a customer need, wherein the products comprise a telecommunications network configuration;

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that enable [[an]]a live human agent and a customer to interact in real time whereby the customer communicates a customer need to the live human agent and the live human agent accesses the functionality of the expert system processing, via the graphical user interface, to perform selection of an available product from the product database based on the rating of the at least two available products during the customer-client agent-customer interaction;

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that generates output comprising a recommended solution and a compatible solution and presents the output to the live human agent via the graphical user interface, each of the recommended solution and a compatible solution being selected from the plurality of available products within the product database, the recommended solution having a rating that is higher than the rating of the compatible solution; and

a set of instructions executed by the processing circuitry that prompts the live human agent to communicate the recommended solution and the compatible solution to the customer in real time after the expert system processing generates the output, wherein the recommended solution comprises a network configuration.

52. through 65.   (canceled)

66.   (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of available telecommunications products comprises a plurality of telecommunications network configurations.

67.   (new) The method of claim 66, wherein the rated telecommunications product comprises a telecommunications network product comprises a telecommunications network configuration.

68.   (new) A method for providing a network configuration solution to a customer, the method comprising:

obtaining information from a customer regarding product needs of the customer,

wherein the information is obtained by a live human agent;

entering the information into a computer system, wherein the computer system comprises an expert system, wherein the act of entering the information is performed by the live human agent;

processing the information, wherein the act of processing is performed by the expert system within the computer system;

producing at least one product solution, wherein the at least one product solution is produced by the expert system within the computer system, wherein the act of producing at least one product solution is performed in accordance with the entered and processed information;

presenting the at least one product solution to the live human agent, wherein the act of presenting the at least one product solution to the live human agent is performed by the computer system; and

presenting at least a portion of the at least one product solution to the customer, wherein the act of presenting at least a portion of the at least one product solution to the customer is performed by the live human agent.

69. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein the act of processing comprises using fuzzy logic to produce at least one product solution.

70. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein the act of processing comprises using heuristics to produce at least one product solution.

71. (new) The method of claim 68, further comprising presenting a plurality of product solutions to the customer.

72. (new) The method of claim 70, wherein each product solution of the plurality of product solutions is qualified by a ranking selected from a plurality of rankings.

73. (new) The method of claim 72, wherein the plurality of rankings comprise recommended, compatible, and not recommended.

74. (new) The method of claim 72, further comprising providing a script to the live human agent, wherein the act of providing a script is performed by the expert system via the computer system.

75. (new) The method of claim 74, wherein the provided script relates to the act of obtaining information from the customer.

76. (new) The method of claim 75, wherein the script comprises one or more questions for the live human agent to ask the customer.

77. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein the customer has no direct interaction with the expert system.

78. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein the needs of the customer comprise telecommunications needs.

79. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein the at least one product solution comprises a telecommunications network configuration solution.

80. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein at least a portion of the needs of the customer are represented as data points.

81. (new) The method of claim 80, wherein the at least a portion of the needs of the customer are represented as data points by the live human agent during the act of entering the information into the computer system.

82. (new) The method of claim 80, wherein the at least a portion of the needs of the customer are represented as data points by the expert system during the act of processing the information.